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Arizona deemed 'hot spot of the world' amid virus surge

By **TERRY TANG**
Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Five months after President Donald Trump hailed Arizona as a model for how it dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic, public health experts warned Wednesday that the state has become "the hot spot of the world" and that health restrictions the governor has been hesitant to impose could have tamped down the crisis.

"It's way worse than July already, and it's going to continue to get worse. We're probably two weeks behind LA in terms of our situation," Will Humble, head of the Arizona Public Health Association, said referring to Los Angeles County, where a COVID-19 surge has created a short-

age of oxygen and led ambulance crews to stop transporting patients they can't revive in the field. Health officials in Arizona reported a triple-digit number of new virus-related deaths for the second day in a row and more than 7,200 daily cases, with hospitals strained by a record number of patients.

Arizona has the worst coronavirus diagnosis rate in the country, with one out of every 119 people in the state testing positive in the past week.

Forceful measures like a statewide mask mandate could help reduce cases down the road, but Humble said he doubts Gov. Doug Ducey will change anything.

Continued on next page



In this Dec. 8, 2020, file photo, vehicles line up as people wait for COVID-19 tests at a drive-thru testing center in Phoenix.

Associated Press



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In this Dec. 2, 2020, file photo, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey answers a question about the arrival of a COVID-19 vaccine in Arizona, while Arizona Department of Health Services Director Dr. Cara Christ listens in Phoenix.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

Hospital administrators also are pleading for the state to take greater measures to curb the spread of the virus.

After a stay-at-home order early in the pandemic was gradually lifted, the Republican governor has declined to reimpose restrictions like neighboring California, which also is seeing a surge in infections and overwhelmed hospitals. In Arizona, indoor dining is allowed and gyms are open at limited capacity, businesses that have been more restricted in many other states.

Ducey has rejected calls from health care leaders to tighten restrictions, arguing it would cause people to be out of work. He also dismissed a proposal to have all public schools go to virtual learning for two weeks after the holidays.

"We have a governor and health director who don't

care. Their goal in my opinion is to vaccinate their way out of this," Humble said. "Eventually it will work. There's just going to be a lot of dead people in the meantime."

C.J. Karamargin, the governor's spokesman, said the current number of cases and deaths are "heart-breaking" but it's a phenomenon happening in other states even with strict stay-at-home orders.

"Faced with strict mitigation measures in place and states that have few or minimal mitigation measures in place all are experiencing the same thing," Karamargin said. "The mitigation measures the state of Arizona put into place early on — they remain in place. We urge every Arizonan to follow them."

At the same time, the state is working to ramp up vaccination distribution efforts, Karamargin added. More than 119,000 people in

Arizona have received the vaccine, state health officials said.

Dr. Joshua LaBaer, director of the Biodesign Institute research center at Arizona State University, called the state "the hot spot of the world right now." He believes at least one in 10 people actually has the virus.

"That means if you're at the supermarket, there are people around you who have it but they may not know it yet," LaBaer said. "It's not a time where I would recommend people spend time indoors with people who are not their immediate family."

The state also "without a doubt" will see more deaths than usual for the winter months, LaBaer said. Aside from COVID-19-related deaths, people with other illnesses who hesitate to go to the hospital are at risk.

Dr. Marjorie Bessel, chief clinical officer of Banner

Health, the state's largest hospital chain, said the uncontrollable spread of the virus could be lessened if the government enforced mask requirements, barred indoor dining and cancelled large gatherings. People also need to wear masks and limit their contact to only those they live with.

"We are not doing a good job with this virus," Bessel said of the state. "At this time during the surge of the pandemic, we need additional mitigation. We need enforcement of those mitigation activities, and we need everybody to do their own part."

Dr. Michael White, chief clinical officer of Arizona's Valleywise Health said the Phoenix-based health care system has no intensive care beds available. Some patients waiting for beds were being treated on gurneys in the emergency department.

"I've never seen anything like this in all the years I've been part of health care," White said.

More mitigation efforts in early December would have likely helped with the surge hospitals are seeing now, he added.

Virus case numbers have been trending upward since Arizona bars, nightclubs and restaurants were allowed to fully reopen in September, Humble said. But travel and people gathering for the holidays, starting with Thanksgiving, was "gasoline that went onto the fire."

A record 4,877 COVID-19 patients were occupying hospital beds as of Tuesday, according to the state coronavirus dashboard.

The Department of Health Services reported 127 additional deaths and 7,206 new cases Wednesday, increasing the state's totals to 574,680 cases and 9,444 deaths. □

U.S. registering highest deaths yet from the coronavirus

By **CARLA K. JOHNSON and LISA MARIE PANE**

Associated Press

The U.S. registered more COVID-19 deaths in a single day than ever before — nearly 3,900 — on the very day the mob attack on the Capitol laid bare some of the same, deep political divisions that have hampered the battle against the pandemic.

The virus is surging in virtually every state, with California hit particularly hard, reporting on Thursday a record two-day total of 1,042 coronavirus deaths. Skyrocketing caseloads there are threatening to force hospitals to ration care and essentially decide who lives and who dies.

"Folks are gasping for breath. Folks look like they're drowning when they are in bed right in front of us," said Dr. Jeffrey Chien, an emergency room physician at Santa Clara Valley Regional Medical Center, urging people to do their part to help slow the spread. "I'm begging everyone to help us out because we aren't the front line. We're the last



In this Dec. 22, 2020, file photo, medical workers prepare to manually prone a COVID-19 patient in an intensive care unit at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in the Mission Hills section of Los Angeles.

Associated Press

line."

About 1.9 million people around the world have died of the coronavirus, more than 360,000 in the U.S. alone. December was by far the nation's deadliest month yet, and health experts are warning that January could be more terrible still because of family

gatherings and travel over the holidays.

A new, more contagious variant of the virus is spreading around the globe and in the U.S. Also, it remains to be seen what effect the thousands of supporters of President Donald Trump who converged this week in Washington, many of

them without masks, will have on the spread of the scourge.

Trump has long downplayed the virus and scorned masks, and many of his ardent supporters have followed his example. He has also raged against lockdowns and egged on protesters objecting to re-

strictions in states such as Michigan, where armed supporters invaded the statehouse last spring.

On Wednesday, the day a horde of protesters breached the U.S. Capitol, disrupting efforts to certify the election of Joe Biden, the U.S. recorded 3,865 virus deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University. The numbers can fluctuate dramatically after holidays and weekends, and the figure is subject to revision.

"The domestic terrorists overran the Capitol police, just as the virus has been allowed to overrun Americans," said Dr. Eric Topol, head of the Scripps Research Translational Institute. "The U.S. lost control of a Trump-incited mob and a Trump-played-down pandemic virus." Some of the forces contributing to the eruption of violence were partially foreseen by experts in global disease planning when they held a tabletop exercise in 2019, said Dr. Eric Toner, a senior scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security who directed the drill. □

Woman shot at Capitol was Air Force veteran who backed Trump

By **ELLIOT SPAGAT**

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The woman who was fatally shot when a mob supporting President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol was identified by authorities Thursday as Ashli Babbitt, whose family described her as an Air Force veteran and avid supporter of Trump and his efforts to stay in office.

A U.S. Capitol Police officer on Wednesday shot Babbitt, who later died at a hospital. The shooting occurred as thousands of rioters forced their way into the House chamber, where members of Congress were hiding, according to Steven A. Sund, chief of the Capitol Police.

He said rioters "actively attacked" Capitol police and other law enforcement officers with metal pipes, discharged chemical irritants and "took up other weap-

ons against our officers." The scene was "unlike any I have ever experienced in my 30 years in law enforcement here in Washington, D.C.," Sund said in a statement.

Ashli Babbitt's husband, Aaron Babbitt, told KSWB-TV, a Fox affiliate in San Diego, that he and his wife, 35, live in San Diego and that she was in Washington on Wednesday to support Trump. Aaron Babbitt sent his wife a message about 30 minutes before the shooting and never heard back.

"She loved her country and she was doing what she thought was right to support her country, joining up with like-minded people that also love their president and their country," he told the news station.

A Twitter account under Babbitt's name identifies her as a veteran, Libertarian and supporter of

the Second Amendment. She frequently retweeted comments by the president and his supporters about Wednesday's gathering and their discredited claims of election fraud. Her last comment, posted Friday, read, "Jan 6, 2021" with American flag and thumbs-up emojis.

The Twitter account also included news of a recall effort against California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, including an endorsement by Kevin Faulconer, a former San Diego mayor. Ashli Elizabeth McEntee is chief executive officer of Fowlers Pool Service & Supply Inc. in Spring Valley, California, near San Diego, according to California secretary of state business records. The company's chief financial officer is Aaron Raymond Babbitt, her husband.

Babbitt's ex-husband, Timothy McEntee, called her



Violent protesters, loyal to President Donald Trump, storm the Capitol, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

a "wonderful woman with a big heart and a strong mind" in an email to The San Diego Union-Tribune. McEntee said he and Babbitt were married from April 2005 to May 2019.

A Facebook account with Babbitt's name says she married Aaron Babbitt on June 25, 2019, and identifies her employer as Fowl-

ers Pool Service.

The Air Force said Thursday that Ashli Elizabeth McEntee was on active duty from 2004 to 2008, most recently at Dyes Air Force Base near Abilene, Texas. She was also member of the Air Force Reserve from 2008 to 2010 and the Air National Guard from 2010 to 2016. □

Social platforms flex their power, lock down Trump accounts

By **DAVID KLEPPER** and **MATT O'BRIEN**

Associated Press

After years of treating President Donald Trump's inflammatory rhetoric with a light touch, Facebook and Instagram are silencing his social media accounts for the rest of his presidency. The move, which many called long overdue following Wednesday's deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol, is also a reminder of the enormous power that social-media platforms can wield when they choose.

Facebook and Instagram said Thursday they will bar Trump from posting at least until the inauguration of President-elect Joe Biden. Twitter said Thursday that it's still evaluating whether to lift or extend what started as a 12-hour lockdown of Trump's account.

It remains unclear how the platforms will handle Trump once he leaves office and is no longer shielded from enforcement of most rules by his status as a world leader. And some critics saw the moves as cynical efforts by the companies to position themselves for a post-Trump future.

"Mark Zuckerberg is enacting this temporary suspension not to protect our democracy but rather to protect Facebook's power and profits," Rashad Robinson of Color of Change, a group that has pushed tech companies to do more to rein in hate speech, said in an emailed statement. "Now that a Democratic majority in the Senate is set, it's suddenly convenient for Facebook to suspend Trump."

In announcing the unprecedented move, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg said the risk of allowing Trump to use the platform is too great following the president's incitement of a mob on Wednesday. Zuckerberg said Trump's account will be locked "for at least the next two weeks" and possibly indefinitely.

"The shocking events of the last 24 hours clearly demonstrate that President Donald Trump intends to use his remaining time in office to undermine the peace-



President Donald Trump arrives to speak at a rally Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

ful and lawful transition of power to his elected successor, Joe Biden," Zuckerberg wrote.

Trump has repeatedly harnessed the power of social media to spread falsehoods about election integrity and the results of the presidential race. Platforms like Facebook have occasionally labeled or even removed some of his posts, but the overall response has failed to satisfy a growing number of critics who say the platforms have enabled the spread of dangerous misinformation.

In light of Wednesday's riot, however, Zuckerberg said a more aggressive approach is needed. "The current context is now fundamentally different, involving use of our platform to incite violent insurrection against a democratically elected government," he wrote.

Instagram, which is owned by Facebook, will also block Trump's ability to post on its platform. YouTube, owned by Google, also announced more general changes that will penalize accounts spreading misinformation about voter fraud in the 2020 election, with repeat offenders facing permanent removal from the platform.

Twitter locked President Donald Trump's accounts for 12 hours after he repeatedly posted false accusations about the integ-

riety of the election. That suspension was set to expire sometime Thursday; the president had not yet resumed tweeting as of late Thursday morning.

A company spokesman said the company could take further action as well. "We're continuing to evaluate the situation in real time, including examining activity on the ground and statements made off Twitter," the spokesman said.

But the platforms continued to face criticism from users who blamed them, in part, for creating an online environment that led to Wednesday's violence.

"Today is the result of allowing people with hate in their hearts to use platforms that should be used to bring people together," singer and actress Selena Gomez wrote on Twitter to her 64 million followers. "You have all failed the American people today, and I hope you're going to fix things moving forward."

Thomas Rid, a Johns Hopkins cyberconflict scholar, tweeted "kudos and respect" to Zuckerberg and Facebook shortly after the announcement that Trump's account would be locked for two weeks.

"Clearly the right move," Rid said. "Consistent incitement to political violence is not acceptable. Twitter should do so as well."

A message left with the

White House on Thursday morning was not immediately returned.

Twitter and Facebook both temporarily locked Trump's accounts Wednesday, the most aggressive action either company has yet taken against the president, who more than a decade ago embraced the immediacy and scale of Twitter to rally loyalists, castigate enemies and spread false rumors.

While some cheered the platforms' actions, experts noted that the companies' actions follow years of hemming and hawing on the dangerous misinformation and violent rhetoric Trump and his supporters have spread, contributing to Wednesday's violence.

The flashpoint on Wednesday was a video Trump posted on Twitter more than two hours after protesters entered the Capitol, interrupting lawmakers meeting in an extraordinary joint session to confirm the Electoral College results and President-elect Joe Biden's victory.

Republican lawmakers and previous administration officials had begged Trump to give a statement to his supporters to quell the violence. He posted his video as authorities struggled to take control of a chaotic situation at the Capitol that led to the evacuation of lawmakers and the death

of four people.

While Trump told supporters that "you have to go home now," he also repeated false claims about voter fraud affecting the election. He then added: "We can't play into the hands of these people. We have to have peace. So go home. We love you. You're very special."

Twitter, Facebook and YouTube all said they removed the video Wednesday, citing its misinformation or dangerous rhetoric.

In a statement Thursday morning, Trump said there would be an "orderly transition on January 20th" and acknowledged defeat in the election for the first time. His aides posted the statement on Twitter because the president's account remained suspended. Monica Stephens, a professor at the University of Buffalo who studies social media, said it made sense for Facebook and Twitter to try lighter forms of curbing misinformation in the months leading up to the election. "They're getting flak from both sides of the political aisle," she said. Trump's ardent supporters have flocked to Parler, Gab and other "free speech" social media sites that cater to conservative voices. Some were used Wednesday by the people who stormed the Capitol.

"Large amounts of the population and press were not anticipating the violence and the vitriol yesterday because it was happening behind closed doors of Parler and Gab instead of Facebook and Twitter," Stephens said. "If they entirely shut out this type of speech it is still going to happen, it is just going to happen where it isn't as read." Social media companies, many of which are already under heightened government scrutiny over their business practices, "want to make sure that people in power have a good view of them because they would like not to be regulated," said Shannon McGregor, an assistant professor of journalism and media at the University of North Carolina. □

France seeks strategy change to reduce troops in West Africa

By SYLVIE CORBET
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — As it pays tribute Thursday to its soldiers killed in Mali and faces questions over a deadly air-strike, France is considering changing its military strategy against Islamic extremists in Africa's Sahel region — and a possible partial troop pullout.

President Emmanuel Macron is expected to announce a timeframe for the evolution of France's largest international military operation at a summit in Chad's capital N'Djamena next month.

On Thursday afternoon, an elaborate ceremony will be held on the Alexandre III bridge in central Paris to pay homage to two soldiers killed in Mali by an improvised explosive device that hit their armored vehicle on Saturday. Three other French soldiers died just five days earlier in similar circumstances.

France's operation in Mali is also shadowed by unclear circumstances surrounding an airstrike that killed at least 20 people in a village where witnesses said Islamic extremists had confronted a wedding party. The French military said those killed were members of a "terrorist armed group" with no connection to a wedding.

French troops have been



The hearse convoy of late French forces soldiers , who were killed in Mali when an improvised explosive device hit their armored vehicle last week, rides on his way to the Invalides for a national tribute, in Paris, Monday, Jan. 4, 2021.

Associated Press

present in Mali since 2013 when they intervened to force Islamic extremist rebels from power. The operation, called Barkhane, was then expanded to include Chad, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mauritania to improve security and stability in the broader Sahel region.

Defense Minister Florence Parly said France will "very likely" reduce its 5,100 troops in the Sahel region, in an interview to Le Parisien newspaper earlier this week. No specific figures have been released.

Attitudes toward the French mission are mixed.

"French troops could not stay forever ... so many and (with) such mixed results. In a way, this is a good thing, because it will push each country to take more responsibility," and collaborate better, said Chrysogone Zougmore, president of the Burkinabe Movement for Human Rights, a civil society group in Burkina Faso.

The discussion, though, comes amid few signs that Islamic extremist violence

is waning: Last weekend militants staged attacks on two villages in Niger near its border with Mali, killing at least 100 people.

Siaka Coulibaly, an analyst with Burkina Faso's Center for Public Policy Monitoring by Citizens, warned of a "severe degradation of security" if the French leave, because African armies aren't ready to fill the void. "We fear the worst for countries in the Sahel if foreign troops ever leave," he said. Next month's N'Djamena summit is set to reassess

the situation a year after a meeting in the French town of Pau led to France sending 600 additional troops and concentrating military efforts along the porous border separating Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Parly stressed that "any reinforcement, by definition, is temporary."

French troops in 2020 "achieved important successes, by neutralizing several top leaders of terrorist groups and by attacking their logistical network to disorganize them," she added.

Last June, Abdelmalek Droukdel, the leader of al-Qaida's North Africa affiliate, was killed in Mali by French forces who had been hunting him in the Sahel for years. AQIM named a new leader in November. A top official at the French presidency said the death of French soldiers will not in itself be the basis for a strategy change. Speaking anonymously in accordance with the presidency's customary practices, he added that the upcoming strategic decisions will be based on the results in the previous year and on Sahel countries' demands. The intentions of newly-elected President Joe Biden regarding U.S. troops in Africa will also be a key factor in determining France's next steps. □

Iraq issues arrest warrant for Trump over Soleimani killing

BAGHDAD (AP) — An arrest warrant was issued Thursday for outgoing President Donald Trump in connection with the killing of an Iranian general and a powerful Iraqi militia leader last year, Iraq's judiciary said. The warrant was issued by a judge in Baghdad's investigative court tasked with probing the Washington-directed drone strike that killed Gen. Qasim Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the court's media office said. They were killed outside the capital's airport last January.

Al-Muhandis was the deputy leader of the state-sanctioned Popular Mobilization

Forces, an umbrella group composed of an array of militias, including Iran-backed groups, formed to fight the Islamic State group.

Soleimani headed the expeditionary Quds force of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

The arrest warrant was for a charge of premeditated murder, which carries the death penalty on conviction. It is unlikely to be carried out but symbolic in the waning days of Trump's presidency.

The decision to issue the warrant "was made after the judge recorded the statements of the claim-

ants from the family of Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis," according to a statement from the Supreme Judicial Council. The investigation into the killings is ongoing, the court said.

The killings sparked a diplomatic crisis and strained U.S.-Iraq ties, drawing the ire of Shiite political lawmakers who passed a non-binding resolution to pressure the government to oust foreign troops from the country. Iran-backed groups have since stepped up attacks against the American presence in Iraq, leading to threats by Washington to shutter its Baghdad diplomatic mission. □



In this Jan. 17, 2020 file photo, released by the official website of the office of the Iranian supreme leader, worshippers chant slogans during Friday prayers ceremony, as a banner show Iranian Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qasem Soleimani, left, and Iraqi Shiite senior militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, who were killed in Iraq in a U.S. drone attack on Jan. 3, and a banner which reads in Persian: "Death To America," at Imam Khomeini Grand Mosque in Tehran, Iran.

Associated Press

2 convicted of defamation in blow to China's #MeToo movement

By HUIZHONG

WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — In a potential blow to the #MeToo movement in China, two former journalists were convicted of defaming a third journalist by publishing an account accusing him of sexual misconduct.

A court in the eastern city of Hangzhou ruled Tuesday that the evidence provided by Zou Sicong and He Qian against prominent journalist Deng Fei was "not enough to allow someone to firmly believe without any hesitation that what was described truly happened."

The court ordered He and Zou to pay 11,712 yuan (\$1,813) in damages. They plan to appeal the ruling. The case was based on an article written by He that Zou published online in 2018, in which He alleged Deng lured her to a hotel room in 2009 to discuss story ideas, then removed her clothes and tried to kiss and grope her.

He said that at the time, she was a 21-year-old intern at a news magazine where Deng was chief reporter. The article came amid a swell of allegations as young women across China went public with stories of sexual assault and misconduct as part of the



Supporters hold banners as they wait for of Zhou Xiaoxuan outside at a courthouse where Zhou is appearing in a sexual harassment case in Beijing on Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020.

Associated Press

global #MeToo movement. However, the movement has had difficulty gaining traction in China, where politics, arts and the business world remain overwhelmingly male-dominated. Accusations brought both publicly and anonymously against a few dozen men in industries ranging from media to academia have sparked a backlash, and since 2018, at least six men have brought defamation suits against either their accusers or people

who helped publicize the accusations.

Deng denied the allegation, writing on his Wechat microblog that he had "never done anything this stupid or this bad." He petitioned successfully to keep details of the case out of the public record to protect the privacy of third parties who might be mentioned.

"I did not even get a chance to find the relevant evidence to prove my innocence, and further, giv-

ing it's been 10 years, I don't even remember this person who said herself that she has only seen me once," Deng wrote.

Throughout the process, Zou and He said they faced a higher burden of proof under Chinese law. Although China allowed sexual misconduct as a ground for lawsuits in 2019, the definition of such harassment remains murky and very few cases are filed. Many have been prosecuted in courts as labor disputes or under

laws to protect public reputations.

Tuesday's decision could discourage others from coming forward with reports of sexual misconduct in the future, the defendants said.

"This is equal to telling someone who was humiliated, who was hurt, that if you don't have audio recordings or videos of the event, then you better hurry up and shut your mouth," Zou's and He's lawyer, Xu Kai, said in a statement. "The court had imposed the entire burden of proof on Zou Sicong and He Qian."

"If back then we had the surveillance footage and the police report and then in the court I told this to Deng Fei, then we should be standing in your position as the accuser," Zou said. "This will definitely have a chilling effect."

He said the the judgment was a setback but she still has hope for the movement.

"I want to know how far we can go with the existing legal system," she said.

Deng did not respond to messages left on his social media accounts.

Zhou Xiaoxuan, the face of one of China's most high-profile #MeToo cases, said she did not see the ruling as a defeat. □

Officials: Attacks around Afghanistan kill at least 23



Covered bodies of civilians lie in the back of a vehicle in front of the Helmand Provincial Government Office in Lashkar Gah, south of Kabul, Afghanistan, Thursday, Jan. 7, 2021.

Associated Press

By RAHIM FAIEZ

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Attacks in Afghanistan left

at least 23 civilians and security forces dead, officials said Thursday, even as Afghan negotiators were in

Qatar to resume talks with the Taliban aimed at finding an end to decades of conflict.

In southern Uruzgan province, a suicide car bomber detonated a vehicle full of explosives early Thursday near a military base, killing six security forces, said a provincial council member who was not authorized to speak with the media.

Mohammad Karim Karimi, deputy head of the provincial council in Uruzgan, confirmed the attack on the military base in Tirin Kot, the provincial capital, but couldn't provide an exact death toll. He said the explosion was so strong it sent shock waves through the city.

In southern Helmand province, at least five civilians were killed and five others wounded in a suspected airstrike late Wednesday on the outskirts of Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital, according to Attaullah Afghan, head of the provincial council. He said the casualties included children and women.

Abdul Nabi Elham, provincial governor, said officials were investigating to determine whether the assault was an airstrike or some other type of attack.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for either attack.

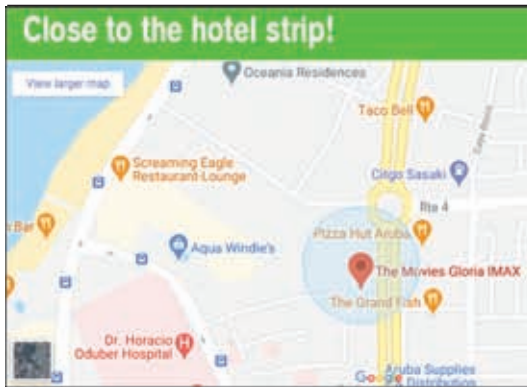
In northern Kunduz province, Taliban fighters stormed a military check-

point killing at least 12 security personnel, said a provincial official who was not authorized to speak with the media.

He said about 10 other security forces were missing and may have been taken into custody by the Taliban during the attack. The official said reinforcements were dispatched to the area outside the provincial capital Kunduz.

Two military vehicles were destroyed and weapons and ammunition from the checkpoint were seized by the insurgents, he added.

Inamuddin Rahmani, spokesman for the provincial police chief in Kunduz, confirmed the Taliban attack. □



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Ethiopian army official confirms Eritrean troops in Tigray

By CARA ANNA

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — A senior Ethiopian military official has confirmed the presence of security forces from neighboring Eritrea in the deadly conflict in his country's northern Tigray region, contradicting the Ethiopian government's denials.

The United States last month said it believed Eritrean troops were active in Ethiopia, a "grave development," as people fleeing the Tigray region alleged that Eritrean forces were involved in the fighting, targeting and abducting Eritrean refugees from camps near the Eritrean border as well as scores of Tigray residents. The fugitive Tigray leader also has alleged Eritrea's involvement.

Ethiopia's Nobel Peace Prize-winning Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who was awarded the prize for making peace with Eritrea in 2018, had "guaranteed" that Eritrean forces had not entered Tigray, United



In this file photo dated Monday, Nov. 30, 2020, Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed responds to questions from members of parliament at the prime minister's office in the capital Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Associated Press

Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said last month.

Eritrea, described by rights groups as one of the world's most repressive countries, is a bitter enemy of the fugi-

five Tigray government, which once dominated Ethiopia's government but was sidelined after Abiy took power and now sees his rule as illegitimate. Ethiopia's government calls the

Tigray leaders criminals. The comments by Maj. Gen. Belay Seyoum, leader of the Northern Command of Ethiopia's defense forces, were published Wednesday by the local

Addis Standard magazine along with a video of him speaking to residents of the Tigray capital, Mekele, late last month.

"An alien army we didn't want came in," Belay said in the translated remarks. "We know the problems that are being raised, it's painful, but who let them in?" They were not welcome, he added: "My conscience does not allow me to say, 'Eritrean army, come and help us!' We can solve our own problems on our own." A senior Ethiopian official, Redwan Hussein, did not immediately respond to a request for comment Thursday as the country celebrated the Orthodox Christmas holiday. Eritrea's information minister has not responded to requests for comment on the issue.

The involvement of Eritrean forces in a region where nearly 100,000 Eritrean refugees shelter in camps has been a major source of alarm for humanitarian workers and others. □

Devils dance, observe virus protocols at Ecuador festival

By DOLORES OCHOA

PILLARO, Ecuador (AP) — Talk of the devil and he is bound to appear, the saying goes. In Ecuador, that means even during the pandemic.

An Andean village festival known as the Diablada, or dance of the devils, was muted Wednesday because of the health emergency. But a small group of people in demon and other costumes still danced without spectators, obeying municipal rules that no more than 30 people participate as Ecuador struggles to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

The costumed fiends as-

sembled in a designated area in Pillaro, denied the chance to strut through streets and grimace at big crowds as they previously did, though scenes of the trimmed festival circulated on social media.

Thousands of tourists have traveled to past editions of the festival, which Ecuador's culture ministry classifies as an occasion of "intangible heritage" in 2009. In past years, at least 1,000 dancers, musicians and others performed in the weeklong new year's festival, some of them spooking bystanders with papier-mache devil horns, fangs and shouts of "achachay"

— said to be the sound a demon makes when feeling cold after emerging from hell.

The Diablada in central Ecuador was restricted to Wednesday's gathering and another diabolical dance-off on Jan. 1. That was instead of daily parades during a weeklong commemoration that is also held in some other Andean regions.

There is no clear record of the origin of the Diablada, according to Ecuador's culture ministry.

One theory is that men disguised themselves as devils to scare rivals in a dispute between two villages over



People dressed as devils dance in La Diablada Pillarena amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Pillaro, Ecuador, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021.

Associated Press

the wooing of women. Some believe it dates to Spanish colonial rule and was a way for Indigenous

people to express discontent with Roman Catholic edicts, resulting in a mix of cultural influences. □

LOCAL



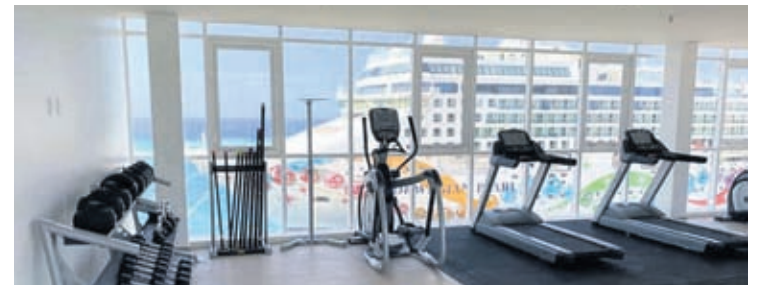
ORANJESTAD — Boosting a buyers confidence comes with a strong sales team, an established company name and experience. The Perret Group are the owners of among others Harbour House Aruba and they live up to the expectation. With 80 % of the condominiums sold in their residence they can do nothing more but be content. Take a look at this cool site reflecting best of two worlds: beach and city.

The residence consists of 111 units in the former 7-level Marazul building at the historical location of Paardenbaai. Harbour House Aruba is the ultimate smart investment or personal living space. A state-of-the-art lobby, an ocean-view gym, bar service, rooftop with 360 degrees view of Oranjestad, on-site parking, 24-hours security and a top floor lounge area with Jacuzzi's. Cherry on the cake: an infinity pool. Harbour House Aruba offers cosmopolitan living in a beach-chic environment. The residence is fast-selling their studios, two-bedroom and three-bedroom units for many

Harbour House Aruba: “Over 80 % sold already, we are doing great”

reasons but in a nutshell we can name: great location, great value for your money and great quality. To see exactly what still is available you may check the website which shows you a map with sold and open units. Updates on construction are also on forehand. When you live abroad stopping by to check upon your purchase is not that simple, yet with the monthly updates on their website, it is a lot easier.

The process of purchase is easy, whether you are abroad or on the island. Make an appointment through the website to visit the sales office when you are here. In that way you can actually see the unit, materials and amenities. If you are not on the island the website can help you out and the sales office is happy to send you



all needed documentation for you to orientate. “When agreed upon the unit you sign an agreement and move forward with the down payment. At receipt of that amount the sales is closed and the price will not change. You know what you get and will not be surprised by price changes. The payment agreements after the deposit will be discussed and are flexible. We assist also in financing by banks,” the sales representative explains.

The ground level of the building will provide a gallery of restaurants, art gallery, stores, and supermarket. “We get in more requests for renting and so far we have restaurant, salon, mini market, art gallery a craft beer factory which makes up for a great variation. A parking lot will be assigned to the owners and visitors.”

City elegance combined with tropical tranquility is

what you get here. The panoramas are breathtaking. Can you imagine yourself with your favorite cup of joe, gazing out over the ocean while the city of Oranjestad is awakening? The new trend is to live tinier but comfy and Harbour House meets this market demand with the perfect product. Everything is close, you are centrally located, just a step away from the beach though right in the main area in Oranjestad. You have history to tell and you are within walking distance to all Oranjestad has to offer. What else do you need? □



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Aruba Featured In World's Best Island's for Remote Working 2021

ORANJESTAD — It's no surprise that the world of remote workers and digital nomads is growing at a rapid rate. With more and more yearning for an independent work environment coupled with the freedom to travel, remote working is on its way to the mainstream field. Not to mention, the ongoing pandemic has especially forced many to reconsider where they are basing themselves. Simply put, remote working is the future, and it's on its way fast. That's why Global travel site Big 7 Travel put together a list of the best cities and islands to work from remotely in 2021.

As the global shift to remote working shows no sign of switching back, workers across the world are leaving behind the traditional office setup to WFH permanently - and for many, that means relocating! In the US, at least, 20% of the current workforce are freelance workers and that number has been predicted to grow to 40% by the mid-2020s. So, where will people want to answer emails from? Aruba is listed at #37 in the list:

"37. Aruba

Aruba, whose national slogan is

"One Happy Island" has launched a remote worker visa which they've aptly coined the "One Happy Workation" program. The Dutch Caribbean island is famous for its pristine beaches and lively locals who are sure to make you feel right at home. To qualify, you'll need to prove that you are em-

ployed by a foreign company or are self-employed to ensure you won't be taking any Aruban jobs. Fair enough, right? They've even sweetened the deal with several Wi-Fi stations throughout the island and hotels that are offering packages to fit your office needs. Plus, for an island nation, the cost of liv-

ing is extremely reasonable."

Source: <https://bigseventravel.com/best-places-remote-working/>

For more information about a workation in Aruba you may contact the site: <https://www.aruba.com/us/one-happy-workation>. □



By law:

Tourist leaving the island with seashells, white sand and corals



ORANJESTAD — For the last months the customs department at the airport intercepted many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and corals as souvenirs.

Conform the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is completely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba, this in order to protect our envi-

ronment. The high amount of seashell, sand and corals confiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the once selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable. Upon confiscation at the airport the tourist also faces a fine that they have to pay before leaving. This is surely not a pleasant experience for the tourist. This also leads to a negative reaction which can put our tourism in a negative light. Let's all give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop selling these to our tourist. We want our future genera-



tions and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals. Let's all protect what is ours! □

Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!



NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down every-

thing but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and



colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous "Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass.

The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass. The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass

is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass. Each colored gem on the beach has its own story. The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the

brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures! Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs. You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! □



U.S. unemployment claims slip to still-high 787,000

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER**

AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of Americans seeking unemployment aid fell slightly last week to 787,000, a historically high number that points to a weak job market held back by the viral pandemic.

Thursday's figure from the Labor Department, a slight decline from the previous week, shows that even with the pandemic recession in its 10th month, many businesses are still laying off workers. Before the recession, weekly jobless claims typically numbered around 225,000.

The renewed surge in virus cases has caused millions of consumers to avoid eating out, shopping and traveling. And states have imposed new restrictions on restaurants, bars and other businesses. Economists at TD Securities estimate that more than half of states are now restricting gatherings to 10 people or fewer, up from roughly a quarter in September.

Those restrictions are forcing many companies, hav-



In this Dec. 14, 2020 file photo, Zeida Hernandez, of Tampa, Fla., left, makes Factory Throwout cigars using an antique hand-operated cigar machine at the J.C. Newman Cigar Co., Tampa's last cigar factory, in Fla.

Associated Press

ing run through much of their cash reserves, to cut more jobs.

"Unemployment remains extremely high, although not nearly as bad as it was in the spring, and the pace of improvement in the job market has slowed

dramatically from the summer," said Gus Faucher, an economist at PNC Financial. "Job growth should pick up in the spring as vaccine distribution continues, better weather allows for more outdoor activities and states gradually loosen

restrictions."

Many economists, along with the Federal Reserve's policymakers, say they're hopeful that once the coronavirus vaccines are more widely distributed, the economy will achieve a broader recovery in the

second half of the year.

The \$900 billion financial aid package that Congress enacted last month should also help accelerate an eventual rebound. Late Wednesday, Goldman Sachs upgraded its forecast for economic growth this year to a robust 6.4%, up from 5.9%. Its upgrade was based in part on the expectation that the Biden administration, with help from the now-Democratic Senate, will support another rescue aid package. Last month's stimulus measure provided a \$300-a-week federal jobless benefit on top of an average state benefit of about \$320. As many as half the states are now distributing the federal benefit, according to an unofficial tally at UnemploymentPUA.com. In states that take longer to pay out the \$300, any missed payments can be made retroactively.

A federal program that provides extended benefits, after state benefits run out, was lengthened to 24 weeks by the aid package.

□

Retail's online future grows brighter after pandemic bump

By **DAMIAN J. TROISE**

AP Business Writer

Online shopping has been a lifeline for many as the virus pandemic shuttered stores and kept people at home.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the change in how people shop in a world growing more comfortable and savvy with technology.

E-commerce sales' strong growth is expected to continue long after the virus subsides. More importantly, online sales are likely going to take up a progressively bigger portion of all retail sales in coming years. E-commerce sales are forecast to account for just over 15% of all retail sales in the fourth quarter of last year, according to Refinitiv, and the share is likely to reach nearly 17% by the end of this year.

The clear winner in this shift

has been Amazon. The online retailer's sales jumped 37% during the third quarter of 2020 and it forecasts growth of between 28% and 38% in the fourth quarter.

Traditional brick-and-mortar chains have gotten the message, ramping up their online sales as more and more people shop remotely rather than in stores.

Walmart CEO C. Douglas McMillon said recently that upward trends for online sales accelerated by "two to three years in some cases" because of the virus, and that change will persist beyond the pandemic.

"With the outbreak of COVID-19, the retail world clicked to a fast-forward and our ability to adapt quickly has been crucial," he said.

Walmart introduced its "Walmart Plus" subscription option in September, giv-

ing members unlimited free delivery along with other mobile friendly shopping features that allow customers to scan and pay for items while they shop.

Some large retailers started looking ahead well before the pandemic accelerated the change in consumer habits.

Home Depot started integrating its in-store and online shopping options in 2017 to take advantage of people shifting to online ordering for both delivery and pickup. Target started bolstering its online ordering and store pickup system several years ago.

Both chains were punished by investors early on for higher expenses as they pushed into e-commerce, but that investment is now translating into very strong results, said Jharonne Martis, director of consumer research at Refinitiv.



In this Oct. 1, 2020 file photo, an Amazon Prime logo appears on the side of a delivery van as it departs an Amazon Warehouse location in Dedham, Mass.

Associated Press

"A lot of these retailers are now building customer loyalty and that will translate into ongoing sales," Martis said.

Convenience is a key driver for online growth, and more companies are rolling out or improving their mobile apps. Purchases made through mobile de-

vices reached \$434.1 billion in 2019, according to J.P. Morgan, and could hit \$729 billion by 2023.

"This is an ever evolving challenge for retailers if they want to stay competitive," Martis said. "Having an e-commerce strategy is crucial for retailers right now." □

Identical twins aren't perfect clones, research shows



In this Saturday, June 18, 2005 file photo, identical twins Alf, left, and Sven Fehnhanhn, left background, 79, from Kassel, pose along with seven-month-old Luis Carl, right, und Albert Frank Millgramm, right background, during a twins' meeting in Berlin.

Associated Press

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**
AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — If you're an identical twin who's always resisted being called a clone of your sibling, scientists say you have a point. Identical twins are not exactly genetically the same, new research shows.

Scientists in Iceland sequenced DNA from 387 pairs of identical twins — those derived from a single fertilized egg — as well as from their parents, children and spouses. That allowed them to find "early muta-

tions that separate identical twins," said Kari Stefansson, a geneticist at the University of Iceland and the company deCODE genetics, and co-author of the paper published Thursday in the journal *Nature Genetics*.

A mutation means an alteration in a sequence of DNA — a tiny change that is not inherently good or bad, but can influence physical features or susceptibility to certain diseases.

They can occur when a cell divides and makes a slight error in replicat-

ing DNA.

On average, identical twins have 5.2 of these early genetic differences, the researchers found. But about 15% of identical twin pairs have more genetic differences, some of them up to 100, said Stefansson.

These differences represent a tiny portion of each twin's genetic code, but they could influence why one twin is taller or why one twin is at greater risk for certain cancers.

Previously, many researchers be-

lieved that physical differences between identical twins were related mostly to environmental factors, such as nutrition or lifestyle.

Jan Dumanski, a geneticist at Uppsala University in Sweden, who was not involved in the new paper, praised it as "a clear and important contribution" to medical research. "The implication is that we have to be very careful when we are using twins as a model" for teasing apart the influences of nature and nurture, he said.

Previous studies, including a 2008 paper in *The American Journal of Human Genetics*, have identified some genetic differences between identical twins.

The new study goes beyond earlier work by including DNA of parents, children and spouses of identical twins. That allowed the researchers to pinpoint when genetic mutations occurred in two different kinds of cells — those present in just one individual and those inherited by that person's children. They also found mutations that occurred before the developing embryo split into two, setting the stage for twins. Stefansson said that his team had found pairs of twins where a mutation is present in all cells of the body of one twin, but not found in the other twin at all. However, "sometimes the second twin may show the mutation in some cells, but not all cells," he said.

Nancy Segal, a psychologist who studies twins at California State University, Fullerton and was not involved in the paper, called the research "heroic and really significant."

"This will force scientists to refine our thinking about the influences of genetics and environment," she said. "Twins are very alike, but it is not a perfect similarity." □

How quickly do I need a second COVID-19 vaccine shot?



Associated Press Illustration/Peter Hamlin

By The Associated Press
How quickly do I need a second COVID-19 vaccine shot?
The first COVID-19 vaccines in the U.S. require two doses

a few weeks apart. People should get some degree of protection within two weeks of the first shot, with the second shot bringing about the vaccine's full protection. For the vaccine by Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech, the second shot is supposed to be after three weeks. For Moderna, it's four weeks.

But how closely those guidelines should be followed has been a point of difference for the United States and the United Kingdom, which has been roll-

ing out the Pfizer vaccine and one by AstraZeneca that requires two doses given four weeks apart.

To get more first shots into people and give them at least some degree of protection, the UK says it's OK to delay the boosters for as long as 12 weeks. But that strategy has been nixed in the U.S., where regulators say there's no science backing the approach.

A major concern is that it's unknown how long the partial protection from one dose can last. "There is no

data to demonstrate that protection after the first dose is sustained after 21 days," Pfizer said.

U.S. regulators agreed, saying too few people in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccine studies missed their scheduled boosters to have enough data to show the strategy might work.

The timing of the shots doesn't have to be exact in the U.S., though; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the second shots can be given up to four days earlier or later. □

Justice Department, federal court system hit by Russian hack

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Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department and the federal court system disclosed on Wednesday that they were among the dozens of U.S. government agencies and private businesses compromised by a massive, months-long cyberespionage campaign that U.S. officials have linked to elite Russia hackers.

The extent of the damage was unclear.

The department said that 3% of its Microsoft Office 365 email accounts were potentially affected, but did not say to whom those accounts belonged. There

are no indications that classified systems were affected, the agency said. Office 365 isn't just email but a collaborative computing environment, which means that shared documents were also surely accessed, said Dmitri Alperovitch, former chief technical officer of the cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike.

Separately, the Administrative Office of U.S. Courts informed federal judicial bodies across the nation that the courts' nationwide case management system was breached. That potentially gave the hackers access to sealed court documents, whose contents are

highly sensitive.

The Justice Department said that on Dec. 24 it detected "previously unknown malicious activity" linked to the broader intrusions of federal agencies revealed earlier that month, according to a statement from spokesman Marc Raimondi.

Separately, the court office said on its website that "an apparent compromise" of the U.S. judiciary's case management and electronic case file system was under investigation. □

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★★★★★

1/08

Solution on Page 14



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Media captures unprecedented storming of U.S. Capitol

NEW YORK (AP) — The storming of the U.S. Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump played out on television in searing fashion Wednesday, with stunning pictures of guns drawn in the House of Representatives and hand-to-hand combat with police. The scenes of bedlam and fear at the center of national government erupted quickly, but journalists wondered whether they should have been a surprise. "It's hard to believe that this is going on," said CNN's Wolf Blitzer. "This is unprecedented, it is dangerous and this is so, so embarrassing for the United States of America."

The social media giants Twitter and Facebook took the unprecedented step of suspending Trump's privileges to post messages on their platforms, at least temporarily. Both companies said Trump had violated their policies. Journalists had gathered to follow Congress' counting of electoral college ballots to seal the victory of President-elect Joe Biden, a normally routine event turned tense by the challenge to the vote by some of Trump's political allies. As that debate was ongoing, the media's focus



People shelter in the House gallery as protesters try to break into the House Chamber at the U.S. Capitol on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

shifted to outside Congress, where supporters who had gathered to hear an aggrieved president fume about his defeat began streaming to the Capitol. They climbed the Capitol steps, where one person held a placard saying "fight for Trump." After breaching the building, pictures emerged of an armed standoff in the House as politicians cowered behind desks and people smashed the building's windows and climbed

in. Newsmax showed stunning footage of police and rioters squaring off in the Capitol Rotunda. "The mob has overtaken the process of trying to certify the Electoral College," said Fox News Channel reporter Chad Pergram. "Security here at the U.S. Capitol has failed." Given Trump's speech and two months of baseless charges that the election was rigged, several journalists raised questions about why law enforcement

seemed so unprepared. "The shock I have is how easy this was," said NBC's Chuck Todd. As images of people banging on a door at the Capitol aired, ABC News anchor George Stephanopoulos said, "that is not Ukraine, that is not Belarus." There were debates in newsrooms across the country about what terminology to use to describe the participants. Demonstrators? Protestors? Rioters? A mob? CNN's Jake

Tapper said, "we call them terrorists." NBC's Lester Holt said "there are some elements of a coup attempt." CBS News' Norah O'Donnell conducted an extraordinary interview with House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, pressing him on whether he has urged Trump to do something to stop his supporters and confronting him on whether the false claims of widespread electoral fraud had led to it. "I just wonder whether someone is going to ... call a spade a spade and I am giving you the opportunity right now," O'Donnell said. Biden spoke to the nation, followed by Trump. The president urged his supporters to respect law enforcement and go home, but also said he "loved" them and repeated claims of a stolen election. Tapper wondered whether CNN should even have aired it. On CNBC, Shepard Smith ordered a tape of Trump's message stopped in mid-stream. "Stop the tape," he said. "That is not true, and we are not airing it." CNN's Abby Phillip said Americans needed to question whether Trump was even capable of leading the country for the next two weeks. □

Dr. Dre recovering well after being admitted into hospital

By **JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.**
AP Entertainment Writer
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Dr. Dre says he will be "back home soon" after the music mogul received medical

treatment at a Los Angeles hospital for a reported brain aneurysm. The rapper and producer said in a social media post Tuesday night that he's

thankful for the "well wishes." TMZ reported that he suffered a brain aneurysm Monday and was recovering at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. "I'm doing great and getting excellent care from my medical team," he said. "I will be out of the hospital and back home soon. Shout out to all the great medical professionals at Cedars. One Love!!" His representative has not immediately responded to an email. Several music artists and athletes paid tribute to Dre on social media on Tuesday. Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg and LeBron James offered prayers toward

Dre's recovery. Dre, whose real name is Andre Young, has produced hits for Tupac, Snoop Dogg, Eminem and more. He's won six Grammys. Born in the Southern California city of Compton, he broke out on the music scene as a co-founding member of N.W.A., producing the group's groundbreaking 1988 debut album, "Straight Outta Compton." Dre produced his own hits and multiplatinum albums, along with crafting music for many others including Kendrick Lamar, 50 Cent, Jay-Z, Nas, Busta Rhymes, the Game and Anderson .Paak. He also found success outside of the rap

genre, producing pop hits for Gwen Stefani and Mary J. Blige. Dre founded Beats Electronics in 2008 with Jimmy Iovine and six years later they launched a streaming subscription service, Beats Music. Apple acquired both in a \$3 billion deal in 2014. □



Dr. Dre attends a hand and footprint ceremony honoring Quincy Jones on Nov. 27, 2018, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

SOLUTION SUDOKU

Difficulty Level: 1/08

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2	6	1	9	3	5	8	4	6
7	4	9	1	2	8	9	3	5
5	8	3	4	9	6	7	2	1
1	2	8	3	5	7	4	6	9
3	7	6	9	4	1	5	8	2
9	4	5	8	6	2	1	7	3
8	9	1	2	7	3	6	5	4
4	5	2	6	8	9	3	1	7
9	3	7	5	1	4	2	6	8

Puzzle on Page 13

Beal scores 60 but Embiid leads 76ers over Wizards, 141-136

By The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Joel Embiid scored 38 points and the NBA-leading Philadelphia 76ers overcame a Washington record-tying 60-point performance by Bradley Beal in a 141-136 win over the Wizards on Wednesday night.

The Sixers are an NBA-best 7-1 in coach Doc Rivers' first season in Philadelphia.

Beal was stuffed on a layup and missed a 3-pointer inside the final minute. But the dynamic guard, who once scored 53 and 55 points in consecutive games, sank a free throw with 4.4 seconds left to reach 60. He went 20 of 25 from the floor, 7 of 10 on 3-pointers and was 13 for 15 from the line to match Gilbert Arenas for the franchise mark.

Beal hit seven 3s and reached 57 points through three quarters, but the Wizards gave up 82 points and trailed by as many as 21 in the first half.

MAGIC 105, CAVALIERS 94

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Former top overall draft pick Markelle Fultz suffered a season-ending tear of the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during the first quarter of Orlando's win over Cleveland.

Fultz, off to the best start of his career, was driving to the basket less than five minutes into the game when he was cut off by Isaac Okoro and his left knee buckled without contact. The Orlando point guard writhed in pain on the floor for several minutes before he was helped into a wheelchair.

Fultz signed a three-year, \$50 million extension last month and was finally showing the promise that made him the No. 1 pick in the 2017 draft as he led the Magic to a quick start this season. He came in averaging a career-best 14.3 points in seven games. Fultz was drafted by the Philadelphia 76ers as part of their lengthy rebuild but struggled for years with a tough-to-diagnose shoulder injury that ruined his jump shot. He was traded to the Magic in February 2019.



Washington Wizards guard Bradley Beal, left, goes up for the shot against Philadelphia 76ers center Joel Embiid, right, during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, in Philadelphia. The 76ers won 141-136.

Associated Press

Terrence Ross scored 20 points and hit five 3-pointers to lead the Magic, who beat the Cavaliers for a second time in three nights. Collin Sexton scored 21 for Cleveland, his eighth straight game with at least 20 to start the season. That broke LeBron James' franchise record from 2004-05.

CELTICS 107, HEAT 105

MIAMI (AP) — Rookie guard Payton Pritchard's putback with 0.2 seconds left capped a wild finish, and Boston beat Miami in their first matchup since last year's Eastern Conference finals.

Jayson Tatum scored 27 points and Jaylen Brown had 21 for the Celtics, who wasted an early 17-point lead and a 10-point lead in the final minute before winning.

Jimmy Butler had 26 points for Miami.

The Celtics went on a late 13-0 run to go up 10 with 1:17 left — only to see the Heat score 10 points in 55 seconds to tie the game on a pair of 3-pointers by Duncan Robinson, one while getting fouled, and another from Goran Dragic.

KNICKS 112, JAZZ 100

NEW YORK (AP) — Austin Rivers scored 23 points, including 14 straight for the Knicks down the stretch, and Julius Randle had 30 points, 16 rebounds and

seven assists as New York won its third straight by beating Utah.

The Knicks trailed by 18 in the first half but outplayed the Jazz in the second and won for the fifth time in six games. It was tied at 96 with under five minutes to play before Rivers made four 3-pointers in the final 4:17.

Elfrid Payton scored 22 points for the Knicks.

Jordan Clarkson had 19 points and Donovan Mitchell added 18 for the Jazz, who were swept in a back-to-back set of games in New York. The Brooklyn Nets routed them 130-96 on Tuesday.

THUNDER 111, PELICANS 110

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 21 points, George Hill hit the go-ahead free throws with 12 seconds left, and Oklahoma City edged New Orleans.

The Pelicans had the final possession of the game, and top scorers Brandon Ingram and Zion Williamson both touched the ball. But it was second-year reserve guard Nickeil Alexander-Walker who took the last shot from 3-point range and it rimmed out.

Darius Bazley had 20 points and 12 rebounds for the Thunder, who avenged a home loss to New Orleans last week while winning for

just the second time in six games.

Williamson scored 29 points and Ingram 24. Steven Adams had 10 points, 10 assists and 11 rebounds for his first career triple-double.

PACERS 114, ROCKETS 107

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Malcolm Brogdon scored a career-high 35 points and made the go-ahead 3-pointer with 2:22 to go, leading Indiana past Houston.

Justin Holiday added a season-best 20 points for Indiana, winner of two straight. It was the first time the Pacers the Rockets at home since January 2017. John Wall had a season-high 28 points in his fourth game with his new team but James Harden finished with 15. Harden also had 12 assists for Houston, which gave up the final eight points after taking a 107-106 lead.

SUNS 123, RAPTORS 115

PHOENIX (AP) — Devin Booker scored 24 points, Jae Crowder added 21 and Phoenix made 21 3-pointers against Toronto. The Suns hit at least 20 3s for the fourth time in franchise history. Crowder led the way with six and Cameron Johnson added four as the Suns finished 21 of 40 (52.5%) from 3-point range. Johnson scored 16 points to lead Phoenix's reserves,

who poured in 42 points. Dario Saric added 15.

The Suns have won five of six and improved to 6-2, tied for tops in the Western Conference with the Lakers.

Pascal Siakam scored 32 points and Kyle Lowry added 24 for the Raptors, who fell to 1-6 and had their six-game winning streak against Phoenix snapped.

BUCKS 130, PISTONS 115

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 25 points and Khris Middleton added 23 as Milwaukee rolled past Detroit for its third straight victory.

The Bucks (5-3) also beat the Pistons (1-7) on Monday night in Milwaukee and have won their last nine regular-season meetings with Detroit. Milwaukee was ahead 82-56 at halftime and led by 34 in the third quarter.

Jerami Grant had 31 points for the Pistons.

The Bucks improved to 4-0 at home, where they're outscoring teams by an average margin of 23.5 points.

HORNETS 102, HAWKS 94

ATLANTA (AP) — Gordon Hayward scored a career-high 44 points and Charlotte recovered to beat Atlanta after trailing for the first time in the fourth quarter.

The Hornets led by double figures most of the game before the Hawks claimed their first lead, 86-85, on John Collins' three-point play with 5:22 remaining. Hayward answered with a jumper and his own three-point play, and the Hornets never trailed again.

Collins led Atlanta with 23 points and 11 rebounds. Trae Young, averaging 28.6 points, scored only seven while going 2 of 9 from the field.

CLIPPERS 108, WARRIORS 101

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Kawhi Leonard had 21 points, including the tying and go-ahead baskets midway through the fourth quarter, and Los Angeles beat Golden State in the first of two consecutive matchups between the Pacific Division rivals. □

Maui Musings: 5 questions for a new year in golf

By DOUG FERGUSON

KAPALUA, Hawaii (AP) —

Justin Thomas and Xander Schauffele were discussing the quality of a certain golf shot, not belonging to either one of them, when the conversation turned into the self-deprecating variety.

"If you want to know how to hook a 3-wood into the garbage, I can help with that," Thomas said.

"If you need to know how to three-putt," Schauffele countered, pointing toward the 18th green at Kapalua.

Thomas hit such a shot last year in the Sentry Tournament of Champions and it nearly cost him. He made bogey on the last hole, which appeared to open the door for Schauffele until his three-putt par led to a three-man playoff that Thomas won.

But that was last year.

It's time to look ahead, and considering how 2020 unfolded, the hope is it can only get better. Here are five topics to consider before Hudson Swafford hits the first shot of the new year:

THE FANS

Rickie Fowler was asked the last time he heard someone cheer for him. Not a few claps from volunteers or staff members at a golf course, but a real, throaty cheer. He thought back to Thursday at The Players Championship, the day before COVID-19 shut down golf.

"It was a bad round, but I have to think there was maybe a good shot in there," he said.

Golf hasn't been the same without them. Schauffele was asked when he thought they might return and he said, "Hopefully, as soon as possible."

There will be a small gathering of people seated around the 18th green at Kapalua, but they can't go anywhere else. No fans in Honolulu or in California (the Genesis Invitational hasn't announced a plan, but considering the circumstances in Los Angeles, no fans can be expected). The Phoenix Open is plan-



Dustin Johnson plays his shot from the first tee during a practice round prior to the Tournament of Champions golf event, Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2021, at Kapalua Plantation Course in Kapalua, Hawaii.

Associated Press

ning for 8,000, a fraction of its normal crowd.

The next decision falls to Florida, about two months away, which is starting to feel as though it's right around the corner. The big question is Augusta National. And no one is more concerned than Ryder Cup officials.

THE RYDER CUP

No other golf tournament relies so much on noise than the Ryder Cup, which is why it was postponed from last September. This time, it might not have a choice but to play with or without fans.

But who plays?

The top six going into 2021 are Dustin Johnson, Bryson DeChambeau, Thomas, Brooks Koepka, Collin Morikawa and Schauffele. U.S.

captain Steve Stricker gets six picks this time, and he's still eight months and four majors away from getting a sense of who will be there and who should be there. Tiger Woods is at No. 17 and is not playing very often. Is he worth another pick? Phil Mickelson has played in every Ryder Cup since 1995 — Morikawa wasn't even born then. He turns 51 in June and is approaching the two-year anniversary of his last win. Since the last Ryder Cup, Lefty has finished a combined 84 shots behind in the five majors he made the cut.

American golf is deep. And young.

THE BATTLE FOR NO. 1

By counting the FedEx Cup and not the raw score at the Tour Championship,

Johnson won or was runner-up in six of his last seven tournaments. The exception was a tie for sixth at the U.S. Open.

That's why he's not only No. 1 in the world, but has the largest gap over No. 2 since Rory McIlroy at the start of 2015.

McIlroy, Jason Day, Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas all have had moments of brilliance. Sustaining it over the course of the year has been the hard part. No one since Woods in 2009 has stayed at No. 1 an entire year.

Jon Rahm and Thomas are behind Johnson, and both are capable of big years. Bryson DeChambeau is swinging faster and faster and promising to reach new frontiers.

TOKYO

March looms as a significant mile marker for deciding the fate of the Olympics. Regardless of who represents which country, it could be a huge setback for golf if it wants to build momentum from its successful return to the Olympics in 2016. It needs the gold medal to really mean something.

It does to Justin Rose. He won in Rio de Janeiro, but the one-year delay didn't help his chances of returning. Rose went into last year at No. 8 in the world, the highest-ranked player for Team GB. Now he is No. 35, the fifth-ranked British player, and countries only get more than two players — a maximum of four — if they are among the top 15.

The battle to wear the Stars & Stripes figures to be fierce as ever, especially with 11 Americans among the top 15. That starts with Johnson, who had no intention of playing at the start of last year because he didn't want to be worn out heading into the FedEx Cup postseason.

As for Woods? He started last year at No. 8, fourth among Americans. Now he's at No. 41. His Olympic flame is flickering.

TIGER WOODS

A year ago, breaking the PGA Tour record with victory No. 83 seemed more like "when" than "if." Now it's probably somewhere in between, and only because he's Tiger Woods.

The pandemic was disruptive, as was his health in March (Woods didn't play for a month before golf shut down). After he started the year by breaking par all four rounds and tying for ninth at Torrey Pines, Woods never contended. In the next seven tournaments where he made the cut, Woods finished on average more than 18 shots behind the winner.

The record is still one victory away. And he's still Tiger Woods. But it's not getting any easier. Only three players older than Woods (45) have won a major — Jack Nicklaus, Old Tom Morris and Julius Boros. □